

Francis Hamlett

There are many things known about Francis; his age - he had just turned 50, his occupation - he was a Graphic Designer; where he went to school as a child - St Joseph's; but none of these capture who he was and how much he meant to us, his family and friends.

Francis was the third child of Leslie and Stella and baby brother to Maria and Matthew. Francis spent his childhood growing up in the country, where he had his little gang and spent his time climbing trees and making campfires and getting into trouble on a fairly regular basis. Francis was sure to install his love of tree climbing and adventure in his sons Charlie, Reuben, Evan and Theo. He took them on a 'boys only' camping trip every year to teach them his version of survival skills (playing in the sand dunes and crabbing) and they would return wearing the same clothes they left in: tired and very happy. The annual burn off from trimming the bushes and trees in the garden would have every Hamlett present, with Francis in charge, delighting in the shared joy of 'burning stuff'. Every year on Charlie's birthday our firework display held the importance and drama of a Las Vegas show of which Francis was the ringmaster and despite having only sparklers and Catherine wheels as the pyrotechnics and usually taking place in the rain, were always a great success, as again, it included 'burning stuff'.

Francis was mischievous from a very young age and had an infectious sense of humour and never lost this trait as his family, work colleagues and friends can attest to. His nieces and nephew knew him as 'fun time Frankie', and Francis once changed the settings on his nephew Angus's phone to read 'police' rather than uncle Francis. Francis would delight in phoning Angus - as Angus thought it was the police calling him. We are never sure what Angus had been up to - to make him feel a phone call from the police was needed. Francis giggled for hours after these calls and sorry Angus - but Maria, Angus' mummy was in on it and would giggle too. He always maintained his sense of fun and loved his 'big boys toys', his green Midget MG, huge remote controlled cars, he passed through a guitar phase and of course, he always had the latest bike.

Francis met Ruth and they had a son Charlie, who was Francis' pride and joy. Francis loved being a father to Charlie and made sure he never missed a rugby match or rugby practice when Charlie was growing up. Francis spent every Sunday morning during rugby season in the freezing cold at the side of a rugby pitch and was never happier and glowed with pride at Charlie's achievements although he was a bit miffed that Charlie grew to be taller than him.

Francis then met Brigitte and went on to have three more sons, Reuben, Evan and Theodore and began his sporting journey with triathlons as he wanted to be fit and healthy and able to keep up with his four sons. Francis was so very proud of his sons and amazed at their achievements, and at how different their personalities were. He loved the fact that the Hamlett house had every conceivable weapon known to man and that his sons were fearless, clever, compassionate, sporting and loving, just as he was. Kisses and hugs and telling each other 'I love you' were a daily family routine and all of his sons know how very much he loved them.

Francis loved meeting people and displayed a theatrical streak. He once was a member of his local amateur theatrical group (which he always maintained he joined only to help Jean - Ruth's mummy out). He starred in many musicals - complete with flares and full makeup and he never lost this theatrical skill. He told his sons about his starring role as an extra in a crowd of hundreds of barbarian warriors in the movie 'Robin Hood, Prince of thieves'. Many an hour was spent watching that movie trying to catch a glimpse of Daddy but Francis claimed he had been victim of a director's cut as obviously he would have stolen the movie from Kevin Costner. Ali and Steve at Francis' work can describe his continued love of costume as his choice of hats worn throughout the years were a source of amusement and conversation for them.

Although Francis had flirted with many sports in his lifetime, BMXing as a child, tennis, windsurfing, golf and surfing, triathlons challenged Francis and he finally found the activity he loved, and stuck at. Francis' personality ensured that he'd gather an eclectic mix of people around him and that he shared his love of the sport and the belief that anyone could compete with all he came into contact with. Brigitte was a little concerned at his love of lycra and Volkswagen vans, but was happy to support Francis and wait with the boys at the finish line to witness Daddy's many triumphs.

Francis loved his family very much and always strived to provide the best for them. He was our rock, our best friend and our confidant who always made things better.

The Hamlett family are heartbroken as they have lost one of the best Daddies and husbands ever, and understand that we were very lucky to have him for as long as we did. It is because we loved him so very deeply, that our loss feels so very great.

Reuben would like his Daddy remembered for meaning 'family, friend and leader' for him.

Evan would like his Daddy remembered for being a father - the very best one.

Theo just wanted to say "I love you Dadda".

Charlie would like his Daddy remembered for being a true gentleman and the best father, who held his family and friends closest to his heart.